



Los Angeles County
Department of Regional Planning

Planning for the Challenges Ahead



Richard J. Bruckner
Director

March 10, 2011

TO: Pat Modugno, Chair
Esther L. Valadez, Vice Chair
Leslie G. Bellamy, Commissioner
Harold V. Helsley, Commissioner
Curt Pedersen, Commissioner

FROM: ^{MSK} Mark Herwick, AICP, Supervising Regional Planner
General Plan Development Section

**SUBJECT: MARCH 23, 2011 – AGENDA ITEM #9
PROJECT NO. R2011-00173-(5)
STONYVALE COMMUNITY STANDARDS DISTRICT**

On November 30, 2010 the Board of Supervisors adopted a motion directing the Department of Regional Planning to prepare a Community Standards District (CSD) for the community of Stonyvale, a private inholding of 30 parcels totaling slightly more than 57 acres in the Angeles National Forest, which was destroyed in the 2009 Station Fire. The intent of the CSD is to modify some development standards of the community's A-1-1 base zoning to allow rebuilding by residents that will replicate the character of the community prior to the fire. In particular, the ordinance establishing the CSD will propose three foot front yard setbacks and eight foot wall heights. With a PowerPoint presentation, staff will provide a status report on the progress of the preparation of the CSD.

Located in the foothills of the Angeles National Forest, the Stonyvale community is bordered on the north by Big Tujunga Canyon Road, on the south by the Big Tujunga Wash and is bisected by Stonyvale Road. The community is accessible from Big Tujunga Canyon Road via Vogel Flats Road next to the USFS Big Tujunga Ranger Station. The community is covered by the Antelope Valley Area Plan and the land use is Open Space-National Forest. The attached draft maps show the regional location of the Stonyvale community and the proposed Stonyvale CSD boundaries identified by the yellow parcel lines.

BACKGROUND

The 2009 Station Fire that engulfed the Angeles National Forest burned more than 160,000 acres and destroyed more than 80 homes, nearly two dozen of them in the

Stonyvale community. The County is committed to assisting residents whose homes were destroyed with the permitting process and Stonyvale residents have worked with key agencies such as Fire, Public Works, Environmental Health, and Regional Planning to move this process forward.

The desire of the Stonyvale residents is to rebuild their destroyed homes to a similar footprint as before the fire. In effect, Stonyvale residents want to reestablish their community and restart their lives there as they were prior to the fire. Preparation of the CSD is one step that meets the needs of the community to reestablish on the ground what was there before the fire. Following the Board motion on November 30, 2010, staff participated in a guided tour of the Stonyvale community on December 16 with community representatives and met with them again on January 27, 2011 to clarify the process and schedule for preparation of the CSD.

Since the Station Fire, Stonyvale residents have organized to work with all County permitting agencies to facilitate the rebuilding process. Emergency Oak Tree Permits have been issued and will continue to be issued as necessary by the Forestry Division. Fire has determined that water capacity for fire protection that existed before the fire is sufficient and that tanks can continue to be used. Public Works has conducted a road survey to determine the true location of parcels as they front Stonyvale Road.

Stonyvale residents are aware that while the proposed CSD will change some development standards to address the character of the community before the fire, they realize that any replacement construction must meet current regulations of Building and Safety, Environmental Health, and Fire. Active participation on the part of residents to work with Building and Safety staff in the process to calculate the rebuild square footage is very important. Furthermore, residents know that full completion of the rebuild process cannot occur until a parcel is legalized by a Certificate of Compliance.

COMMUNITY ISSUES

Prior to the Station Fire, the Stonyvale community was comprised primarily of homes and accessory structures built during the 1930s to 1950s. Many were not legally established and most of the parcels were in need of a Certificate of Compliance. The fire forced residents to consider development regulations that were not in place at the time of original construction or subsequent additions or rebuilds.

Residents want to replace their destroyed homes with new construction that does not exceed the existing footprint but does not necessarily look exactly the same. They want to ensure their homes are properly sited and built using "green" construction practices. Since the road survey conducted by Public Works demonstrated that there is substantial overlap of public right of way into private property on many parcels to the north of Stonyvale Road as well as the proximity of the Big Tujunga Wash adjacent to parcels

south of Stonyvale Road, residents are requesting the three foot front yard setbacks for flexibility in the location of their rebuilt homes.

Residents are very concerned about the safety of their community and consider a wall height of eight feet to be sufficient for this purpose and are therefore requesting eight foot wall heights in all setbacks. The Board motion also requested that horse-keeping be explored as residents had expressed a desire in stabling up to three horses on parcels of .6 acres or more. Staff research subsequently found that 23 of the 30 parcels far exceed the minimum 15,000 square feet necessary to keep three horses for personal use as defined in Title 22. The remaining seven parcels were smaller than .6 acres, therefore, residents can presently legally stable up to three horses and it is not necessary to include such a provision in the draft CSD.

NEXT STEPS

As staff proceeds with preparation of the CSD, work on the ordinance, the Initial Study and staff report will be completed and finalized prior to scheduling a public hearing before your Commission.

Lastly, to provide an opportunity to see firsthand the conditions of the Stonyvale community, staff is interested to know if your Commission may consider scheduling a fieldtrip to the area.

A hard copy of the PowerPoint presentation that will be made to your Commission will be sent to you on March 17. In addition to the aforementioned draft maps, please find attached the Board motion directing preparation of the CSD and subsequent 30-day status reports that staff has prepared. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 974-6423 or mherwick@planning.lacounty.gov.

JS:MSH:msh

Attachments:

1. Board motion 74-D (November 30, 2010)
2. 30-day status reports to the Board
3. Regional location map of the Stonyvale community
4. Draft Stonyvale CSD boundary map